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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Thursday, December 5, 1940.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "HOLIDAY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Publication available, Leaflet 49-L, Ice Creams Frozen without Stirring.

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With Christmas less than three weeks off, it's not surprising to find many holiday questions in the mailbag. We've picked out one about Christmas gifts of cotton, and two on ice cream. Ice cream always seems to run a close second to plum pudding as a popular Christmas dessert. Again we've asked the Bureau of Home Economics to reply to our questions.

The first writer says: "We have promised to use at least 50 pounds more cotton this year in one way and another, and we thought we might begin with a cotton Christmas. Can you suggest some practical cotton Christmas gifts we could make or buy? Nothing very expensive, but especially a few ideas for the menfolks."

Some of the cotton-growing States had a cotton Christmas last year. The quota of 50 pounds isn't a large amount of cotton for an average family to need and add to its furnishings during a year, the Bureau of Home Economics says. Just fitting out one double bed with a cotton mattress, bedding protectors, two sheets, two pillow slips, a lightweight cotton quilt or comforter, and a bed-spread uses 75 pounds of cotton! But probably not many will give mattresses for Christmas presents. So let's consider some of the less expensive bedroom supplies that make good gifts.

How about a pair of pillow slips, either plain or embroidered with an initial or a monogram? That's an ideal gift for anybody who keeps house. There then are dresser scarfs and numerous washable bed-room closet accessories like shoe pockets and garment protectors made of cotton. If you can run a sewing machine you might make long cotton bags for party clothes, or hemmed yard-wide

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squares of cheesecloth to keep dust off the shoulders of ordinary dresses. Father and the boys might like black sateen fitted shoulder covers for their suits.

Speaking of the menfolks, would one of the boys like a dark denim studio couch cover for his room? Or some simple masculine-looking curtains of monk's cloth or some other plain cotton material? Or his own special bath towels, marked in cross stitch.

No doubt you've already thought of towels of all sorts, and sheets and bed-spreads. If you want to please the mother of a large family, give her half a dozen--or a dozen--face cloths. You could mark them if you have time, but she won't care so much about having them marked as having plenty of them. And maybe mother has often wished for a matching bath mat and seat cover to dress up the bath-room. Other cotton bath-room gadgets include those colorful boxes of soft powder puffs--and some first-aid bandage rolls in different widths.

Now about cottons for the table. You can list full-sized cloths, luncheon cloths, doilies, napkins, runners and squares for between-meals. Have you ever made a set of colored fringed doilies in pastel shades? The material is inexpensive, and you can have them all one color or all different colors to go with the vari-colored china so popular at present.

For the kitchen you can give tea towels, hot holders, gay washable curtains, or maybe some new aprons.

And when it comes to cotton things to wear, the choice is unlimited. For the men-folks, bath or lounging robes; pajamas; underwear; shirts. For the ladies, pajamas, nighties, house-coats, robes, and, if you can find them in your retail stores, perhaps some of the new cotton stockings. That is, the ones made from designs developed in the Bureau of Home Economics. If you give even half of the things suggested, you'll be well on the way to using up your 50-pound quota of cotton.

Now for the questions on ice cream. This letter-writer says, "I was surprised to hear one of my friends complaining that she didn't like the ice cream made by Blank's firm because it had gelatin in it. Now the recipe I always use in making ice cream at home calls for a small amount of gelatin, and so I began to wonder whether I was making a mistake in using it. What is wrong with putting gelatin in ice cream? We use lots of gelatin in other ways-- in desserts and jellied salads and soups and so on. Is there anything else I ought to use instead?"

The Bureau of Dairy Industry says that your friend has a common, but entirely erroneous notion about that gelatin. Practically all commercial ice creams contain some kind of binder or thickener, and it's usually gelatin. Of course we use gelatin in many ways on the table. It has some food value, and foods made with it are delicate in texture and easily digested.

As to making mousses and ice creams at home in a mechanical refrigerator,-- you don't churn or stir the mixture. So unless you use a very heavy and expensive whipping cream, ice crystals will form all through the ice cream. But aside from the cost of heavy double cream, many people dislike too rich an ice cream. You can get a smooth texture and good flavor without over-richness if you dilute the rich cream with thin cream or evaporated milk, or with rich milk thickened with gelatin, or eggs, or flour, or marshmallows. You don't have to use much gelatin; a teaspoonful to a pint of combined double and thin cream is enough. You could also add 2 stiffly beaten egg whites to reduce richness, increase volume and improve the texture, but they are not absolutely necessary when you use the gelatin.

Perhaps you'd like to send to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for Leaflet 49-L, Ice Creams Frozen without Stirring, to get an exact recipe for your Christmas ice cream. This leaflet is free. And for an extra Christmassy dessert we suggest putting a candied cherry or cranberry on each portion! That's all for today. More questions next week.

